

Introduction

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The book takes its lead from academic Annamaria Pagliaro's experience straddling Australia and Italy over a thirty-year period. As both former colleagues and collaborators of Pagliaro, we editors intend to open a kaleidoscope of perspectives on the international research landscape in the field of Italian and Anglophone studies, starting from Pagliaro's own contribution to the creation of relations between the two cultures in the period that saw her work transnationally as Director of the Monash University Prato Centre (2005-2008). The idea for this volume of "offerings" stems from a desire to share an academic space for discussion and reflection involving international scholars and those with different positions in the academy who have studied, collaborated and worked with Italianist Annamaria Pagliaro, currently Senior Research Fellow at the Department of Italian Studies, Monash University (Melbourne, Australia).

For volumes of this nature, one often witnesses varying (un)successful attempts to heavily "frame" the materials for reasons that have more to do with the imperatives of the academic publishing market than the intrinsic cohesive needs of the work. We, on the contrary, believed that, for this particular collection, the best way to celebrate the dedicatee's lifetime of scholarship was to let her work not only inspire but also somewhat shape the collection. If one is allowed a translation studies-based metaphor, ours here is the (in)visibility of two "translators" (Venuti 1995): we have attempted to render/capture/*translate* into book-form a range of rigorously scholarly, yet also (trans)cultural and emotional responses (Breeze, Taylor 2020) to the work of Pagliaro.

Along these lines, the collection can be understood as a series of critical (re)readings, characterised by a varyingly emphasised metacritical and self-reflexive element. Barbara Pezzotti's article, which opens the collection, explores Soria's, Siviero's and Fois's contemporary rereadings of the Risorgimento, through the prism of crime fiction. Giuseppe Traina steers the collection in a metacritical and self-reflexive direction, by offering his own rereading of some of his previous work on Camilleri, which is presented in a significantly revised and refined critical light. Andrea Pagani tackles Collodi's schoolbooks, focusing on the narrative rendition of paternal figures and its nation-building implications. The collection takes another metacritical turn with Catherine Ramsey-Portolano's piece. Portolano retraces her own steps as a Neera scholar, whilst reflecting on the evolution of *italianistica* through the lens of Neera's matrilinear influence on authors who followed. Transnationality is at the basis of Comoy Fusaro's contribution. Much like Portolano's, Fusaro's piece proves valuable not only to *Ottocentisti* but also to those more broadly interested in a transnational and transcultural, diachronic mapping of the field of Italian Studies itself. An effective blend of close-reading and cultural studies is at the foundation of Barisonzi's analysis of D'Annunzio's *La Vergine Orsola*. Barisonzi convincingly argues that – in the 1884 short story – the idea of rape is used as a narrative escamotage to bring to the fore the question of female entitlement to sexual desire as part of a wider social critique. Along similar transnational lines, Gussago offers a geo-critical reading of George Gissing's transtextual fascination with Italy. Far from being a trite, othered stereotype, Italy becomes, for Gissing, a site of and a model for (trans)cultural experience. Transnationality and transculturality arguably culminate with Roberta Trapè's exploration of "Australians' Literatures and Cultures in Tuscany". A transnational notion of "place" occupies a prominent space in Trapè's discussion, in which Prato becomes the site of productive scholarly, literary and cultural intersections. A disciplinary "distant reading" (Moretti 2013) of sorts forms the basis of Virga and Zuccala's contribution. This fundamentally theoretical piece represents an attempt to reflect on some conceptual and terminological nodes of the (comparatively) recently institutionalised field of Postcolonial Italian Studies. Antonio Pagliaro's offering to Annamaria distillates decades of professional and personal ties into an erudite discussion of Pellico's literary reception. In the interview piece, which ends of the collection, Annamaria Pagliaro recollects her experience across cultures and educational contexts, between Australia and Italy.

We are greatly indebted to the people who have contributed to this volume, many of whom are precious colleagues, some of whom are close friends, for bearing with us in spite of the many delays this project had to go through (including a pandemic ...). Special thanks to Carolyn James, who contributed the Preface, and to Tony Pagliaro – this would not have been possible without your generous support throughout the different stages leading up to the publication of this book.

References

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